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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: UNSC Resolution 1636,
Iraq, Palestinian Territories (11/7)

1. Summary: Syrian papers led with reports on Arab and international contacts to discuss UNSC Resolution 1636, citing the planned visits to Syria by Arab League SecGen Amr Mousa, and by UN SecGen Annan and Saudi Crown Prince Sultan Bin Abdel Aziz to Cairo.

As for Iraq, papers reported the US "Operation Steel Curtain" offensive in Al-Qaem, and the Muslim Scholars Assembly's rejection of a request by the Iraqi government to retain occupation troops in Iraq.

On developments in the Palestinian territories, papers reported that EU observers will help to reopen the Rafah border crossing and that Israel is trying to block the EU observers' role. Headlines featured Sharon's statement that Israel would not make any effort to ease restrictions ahead of Palestinian parliamentary elections if the militant group Hamas is allowed to participate.

End of summary.

2. Selected Headlines:

"Arab appreciation for Syria's step to commence investigation into the Al-Hariri assassination" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/7/05)

"Denunciation of pressure on Syria continues. The pressure aims to destabilize the region and serve the interests of superpowers. [Former Lebanese PM] Al-Hoss calls for confronting US arrogance" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/7)

"US forces proceed with "Operation Steel Curtain" offensive in Al-Qaem. Muslim Scholars Assembly rejects the government's request to retain occupation troops" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/7)

"Arab League SecGen Amr Mousa is to visit Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the Czech Republic within the framework of the Arab League move to discuss developments in the region after Resolution 1636" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/7)

"Iran reiterates support of Syria. Arab lawyers criticize Resolution 1636: Double standards make the international organization lose its credibility" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 11/7)

"New York Times: The Bush Administration fabricated connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/7)

"Four US marines killed, three injured, in various assaults in Iraq. The Arab League delegation intensifies contacts in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/7)

"Sharon promises to block Palestinian elections if Hamas runs in them" (Government-owned Tishreen, 11/7)

"Four Palestinians arrested in the West Bank. Disagreement between Israel and the EU over the role of EU observers at the Rafah border crossing" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 11/7)

3. Editorial Block Quotes:

"The Targeting and the Truth!"

Dr. Fayez al-Sa'igh, Chief Editor of government-owned Al-Thawra, commented: "The new Resolution 1636, which the Security Council issued recently against Syria, is based on a fabricated report by a German prosecutor, whose credibility is doubted in Germany, where some German civil societies are prosecuting him for violating German laws by associating with US research centers and receiving what exceeds German norms of allowable income and wealth. "The resolution is more packed with paragraphs against Syria than with what serves the case of the assassination of PM Al-Hariri. The strange thing is that despite the legal distortions, which are based on political distortions, the

resolution was passed unanimously, which shows the enormous intervention and pressure by the United States and the efforts exerted before and during the session....

"But the question of the Syrian citizen is: What if Mehlis deliberately says, despite all this cooperation, that Syria did not cooperate and returns the ball to the Security Council, claiming that Syria did not cooperate, or cooperated but not in the required form? And what is the required form? And what also if the second report, which Mehlis will submit to the Security Council on December 15, is politicized, as the previous one has been, and becomes an extension of it in form, purport and aim?

"Is it not better to have an international, regional, Arab, or Lebanese legal criminal authority decide and judge or at least review the decision on whether there was cooperation, complete or not, to make sure about its criminal, legal, and juridical conditions, especially since Syria has formed a committee, set it in operation, and is fully determined to cooperate...?

"Halting the State of Agitation and Desecration"

Muhammad Ali Buza, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented: "Foreign forces are using Al-Hariri's assassination as an excuse to interfere politically and militarily in the region in order to divide it into new cantons and spheres of influence, as a prelude to implementing the US-sponsored Greater Middle East plan.

"Hawks of the US Administration, in an attempt to escape their crises at home and abroad, might engage in new adventures and reckless and uncalculated actions that will fan current fires and push the region toward the unknown....

The international community must adopt a firm and responsible position to curb American unilateralism and muscle flexing and bring balance back to international relations....

"The US campaign against Syria, the issuance of unjust resolutions against it, and the constant pressure to politicize the investigations into Al-Hariri's assassination are meant to weaken and blackmail the Syrian position and force Syria to make concessions on the hot topics and major issues that are linked to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Palestine, Iraq, and the resistance and its weapons.

"The United Nations might turn into an instrument and spearhead of the American plan and an organization offering certificates of good conduct to Israel, the racist, colonialist, and expansionist entity that has the long arm and the major interest in everything that has taken place and is taking place, as its leaders and officials have admitted...."

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